

'Recover all water bodies to check waterlogging'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

All the water bodies in and around the city must be recovered from illegal encroachers to eliminate waterlogging problem, experts at a seminar said yesterday.

They also stressed the need for a long-term visionary plan in this regard as Dhaka is gradually becoming unliveable.

The Institute of Diploma Engineers, Bangladesh (IDEB) organised the seminar titled 'Waterlogging in Dhaka

City: Problems and Solutions' at its seminar hall in the city.

IDEB Chairman Shafi Uddin Sarker presented a research article on the problems and solutions on waterlogging in the city, particularly in Dhaka-Narayanganj-Demra (DND) embankment area.

He also demonstrated a geographical condition of the water bodies and canals of Dhaka city and compared their present condition to what they were like 15 years ago.

Shafi Uddin described how the illegal land grabbers and housing developers encroached on different water bodies such as Navy colony-Ibrahimpur-Kalayapur canal, Gulshan-Banani-Mohakhali lake, Begunbari-Paribagh canal, Dhamondi lake, Ramma-Segun-bagicha-Arambagh-Gopibagh-Jirani canal and Dholaikhali.

Even different government bodies encroached on the canals and lakes in the name of construction of roads, box culverts and government buildings, he added.

The box culverts, which have been constructed by destroying open canals, are largely responsible for the worsening situation, he said and called for restoration of those canals and eviction of illegal encroachers.

The IDEB chairman also criticised a government decision to make rainwater of Dhamondi, Lalma, Mohammadpur, Sobhanbagh, Kalabagan, Kathalbagan and Razabazar areas drain into the river Balu, 10 miles away from these areas.

Terming the decision suicidal, he suggested that the rainwater should be released to the river Turag, just a

mile away from these areas.

To remove waterlogging problem inside DND embankment, the local residents should raise the land up to the level of highway, he said.

LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan attended the seminar as the chief guest while Bangladesh Economic Association President Dr Quazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad presided.

The minister said some canals have already been recovered during a drive recently. The drive will resume after the rainy season, he added.

In some cases, the government bodies have constructed roads and box culverts, encroaching on the canals, he said, adding that these aspects should be looked into.

He also said a committee with representatives from all the government bodies concerned would be formed to solve such problems.

Prof Emazuddin Ahmed, former vice-chancellor of Dhaka University, called for a long-term master plan to save Dhaka from waterlogging and other problems.

Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation Chairman Shamsur Rahaman Shimul Biswas said the groundwater table has gone down to 200 feet from 17 feet as most water bodies in and around Dhaka have been filled up.

Dr Kazi Ali Azam, managing director, Dhaka Water and Sewerage Authority (Wasa), and M Enamul Haq, director general, Bangladesh Haor and Jalashay Unnayan Board, also spoke.



PHOTO: STAR

Two child artistes of Alor Bhupan Shishu Kishore Parishad perform at a programme at the Central Shaheed Minar yesterday. The Sammita Sangskritik Jote organised the event following its rally protesting the countrywide serial blasts.

30 tolas of gold ornaments stolen from jewellery shop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Thieves broke into a jewellery shop at Lalbagh in the city and took away ornaments and cash totalling around Tk 3 lakh on Monday night.

Abdur Rahman, owner of Aman Jewellers, said he locked the shop after the day's business on Monday but found the locks are broken yesterday morning.

"As a local businessman called me, saying that locks are broken, I rushed to my shop and found cash and ornaments missing," he told reporters.

He lodged a case with Lalbagh Police Station, stating that 30 tolas of gold ornaments and Tk 5,000 have been missing.

Police picked up five people, including guards of the market, on charges of their involvement in the heist.

ARMS CASE Three former JCD leaders charged

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Ramma police yesterday pressed charges against three former Jatiyatabdhi Chhatra Dal (JCD) leaders in an arms case.

The investigation officer submitted the charge sheet to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka showing 14 people as prosecution witnesses.

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested Mostafizul Islam Mamun, former general secretary of Dhaka University unit, Harun ur Rashid Shishir alias 'Dog Shishir', former central international affairs secretary, and Ashraf Hossain, member of the same unit from Shahbagh in the city on August 6.

Police also recovered a pistol and ammunition from their possession. Later, Ramma police filed an arms case against them.

Following their arrest, they were taken on remand for a five-day in the two phases.



PHOTO: STAR

Construction materials occupy a large portion of a road at Armanitola in the old part of the city, causing suffering to passengers as well as pedestrians.